

Remarks

The drawing were objected to. Corrected drawing sheets are enclosed.

Claims 1, 2, 7 to 10, 14, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Sollinger.

Applicant has invented a replacement cover for existing meters. Applicant's replacement cover can be taken into the field and installed on an existing meter by a person who has very little training. The installer does not have to turn off the power. He simply removes the existing cover and replaces it with Applicant's replacement cover. He does not have to make any electrical connections to the existing meter or re-adjust or re-set the existing meter. The only connections he has to make are to plug the replacement cover to plug it in to a source of power and to a phone line (if the replacement cover is not wireless), None of the references cited show or suggest a replacement meter with those properties.

The Examiner seems to be arguing that by stating that his optical scanner may be placed "on the inside face of the transparent cover" Sollinger has disclosed Applicant's replacement cover. Applicant does not agree. Sollinger makes no suggestion that a cover with his optical scanner on the inside could be used and sold as a cover to replace the covers on existing meters. Sollinger is retrofitting existing covers, not replacing them. His invention requires a technician who is skilled enough to open an existing meter and attach his optical scanner in a position so that it can correctly read the usage of the meter. The type of optical scanner that is used and its position inside the cover depend upon the type

of display that meter has. The technician must be sure that he uses the correct scanner for each type of meter and that he places the scanner in the correct position or the meter will not be read or will not be read correctly. Applicant avoids those problems by having the usage reader “directly attached” to the cover (see paragraph [0043], line 1, for support), and all of Applicant’s claims require a direct attachment.

While Sollinger states that he can place his scanner 4 “on the inside face of the [existing] transparent cover” (column 2, lines 36-37), there is no statement or suggestion in Sollinger that his microcomputer 5 is also placed “on the inside face of the transparent cover.” In fact, his drawing shows that microprocessor 5 is connected to three different meters, an electricity meter, a gas meter, and a water meter. Thus, Sollinger’s microprocessor 5 is not inside the cover of just one of the meters.

Moreover, Sollinger states, “The microcomputer includes a timer 6 and a power supply with backup battery 7.” (Column 2, lines 29-30). It is highly unlikely that Sollinger can place his optical scanner 4, microcomputer 5, timer 6, and power supply with backup battery 7 inside an existing meter cover. There simply would not be enough room. Note that Applicant’s meter cover has a lateral extension 16 in order to hold the necessary equipment. Without such an extension, it is not possible for Sollinger to place his automatic meter reader and other equipment inside the cover. All of Applicant’s claims now require the microprocessor (i.e., the automatic meter reader, AMR, which includes a transmitter) to be inside the extension of Applicant’s cover.

Claims 3 to 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over

Sollinger. Sollinger was discussed in Applicant's response to the preceding rejection and those comments are applicable to this rejection as well.

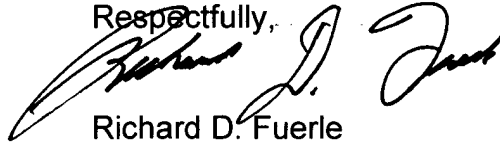
Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Sollinger in view of Hunter. Sollinger has been discussed. Hunter was cited to show communication with the internet, but the combination of references does not disclose or suggest the invention now claimed by Applicant.

The Examiner states, "Sollinger in view of Kirby" in his discussion of this rejection. Since Claim 15 was not rejected over Kirby, the Examiner is respectfully requested to clarify his use of Kirby.

Claims 11 to 13 and 17 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Sollinger in view of Karpenko. Sollinger has been discussed. Karpenko was cited to show optical reading of a meter, but the combination of references does not disclose or suggest the invention now claimed by Applicant. Again, Kirby is mentioned, but the rejection was not made over Kirby, so clarification is requested.

All of the claims are now believed to be allowable over the references cited and reconsideration and allowance of all of the claims are therefore requested. The Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney at (716) 774-0091 to resolve any remaining problems.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard D. Fuerle", written over the word "Respectfully,".

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